

SENATOR PETERSON: Mr. President and members, I handed out just a little bit ago what is available at Hastings and these are DPI's old figures and they say there's 31, 32 beds available at Hastings. At no one time has there ever been, that I know of, 31 beds, 10 at the most. Look at those figures I handed out. Short-term, budgeted '87-88, 14; average daily census, 13. There is one bed there. Extended 130; average census, 124; six; security 13, 12, that leaves one, and alcohol care you've got two. Ten beds. And this comes from even from the psychiatrist that work...have to work in regards to getting into Hastings. There is never no room. Ten beds at the most. That don't even begin to cover...34 beds won't even cover it, ladies and gentlemen. Opening 34 beds will not cure the problem by no means but sure will help the many that need hospitalized for two weeks or three months. If we was to open a 34-bed unit at Norfolk today, it would be full. There's no question about it. You take 34 beds and you have an average stay of three months per patient, you can serve 136 people. DPI has refused to fund this and I don't think, unless we pass this, they will fund it to open that ward. Senator Hannibal, would you respond to a question?

SPEAKER BARRETT: Senator Hannibal.

SENATOR HANNIBAL: Yes.

SENATOR PETERSON: Senator Hannibal, if we don't get any money to open this ward or any other wards, what do we do with these people that are suicidal, that we continue...I continue to get from county attorneys, sheriffs and psychiatrists and all, what are we going to do with them?

SENATOR HANNIBAL: Well, Senator Peterson, I saw your numbers here and I looked at those numbers, I compared them with numbers that DPI put out in a hearing for you saying 31 beds and, obviously, they both can't be right. I don't know which ones are the right numbers but what I would suggest, to answer your question, is if there is some vacancy and maybe the number is somewhere between those, I don't know, I have no way of knowing, but if there is some vacancy at Hastings, the first and foremost thing we ought to do is utilize that facility to its maximum ability. Secondly, if after doing that then if there are no vacancies at Hastings, at Lincoln, at Norfolk, and we need more beds for those people you're talking about, the million three that is in that budget could be used for that purpose, right